

Mount Vernon Planning and Zoning Commission
Minutes
January 9, 2013
City Hall Council Chambers, 6:30 PM

Meeting was called to order by Rich Hileman at 6:30 p.m. Members present: Rich Hileman, Trude Elliott, Carol Chamberlain, Truman Jordan, Dave Davis, Jenna Wischmeyer and Bill Micheel. Also in attendance: Zoning Administrator Matt Siders and Randy Nicol.

1. Approval of Agenda and September 12, 2012 minutes. These documents stand approved unless otherwise indicated by Commission members. Hileman stated that Chapter 23 of the Mount Vernon Code of Ordinances requires the board to elect the chairman and vice-chairman annually at the first meeting of the year. This is not on the agenda so he would like to amend the agenda to make the second item "Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman". Minutes and agenda approved as amended.
2. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Chamberlain made a motion to elect Rich Hileman as Chairman, seconded by Davis. Carried all. Chamberlain made a motion to elect Truman Jordan as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Davis. Carried all.
3. Open Forum: each citizen limited to 5 minutes per discussion item.
4. Discussion and possible action on proposed lighting ordinance. Randy Nicol was in attendance to give a presentation on lighting options. Nicol has lived in Mount Vernon since 1992. He was involved in the downtown lighting project in Lisbon and has been involved with lighting for 29 years. He was involved with the LED lights that were put on the gazebo, LED lights on Ed Sauter's building, lighting at Hills Bank, parking lot lighting at the elementary school and lighting at the new high school. He represents approximately 100 lighting companies that do strictly commercial and industrial lighting, no residential. He has also been involved in street lighting in Cedar Rapids, Czech Village, Ely, Springville, Kalona and Coralville. He went on to say that street lighting is changing. Alliant Energy has purchased 14,000 LED fixtures and are replacing current fixtures with these lights. That being said, the DOT will not accept LED lighting on state highways without a variance. The DOT uses the IESNA (Illuminating Engineering Society of North America) standards. Nicols said his first suggestion when working on a lighting ordinance is keep it to a minimum. Don't go into too much detail and try to restrict too much. Keep it to basics. Micheel asked if Nicol had a model ordinance that the board could review. He

suggested taking a look at Hiawatha's ordinance, which was very basic, and the board members had been given a copy of this.

Nicol said that recently Lynch Ford changed every light at their facility, going from 1000 watts to 575 watt lamps. At the Kia dealership in Hiawatha, the City had them turn all of their lights down flat that is part of the dark sky initiative. Iowa has not adopted the "dark sky" yet, only certain cities. Nicol said the more stringent the ordinance is, the harder it will be for the city to enforce it.

Nicol then assisted the board with going through their draft ordinance, touching on definitions and specific areas of the ordinance and how they would apply to Mount Vernon, making changes or suggestions as they went. Hiawatha's ordinance was also referenced during this discussion. Elliott said that the lighting committee had wanted something flexible, to make enforcement easier. Elliott also said that the person or persons responsible for enforcement will need to have training available to enforce the ordinance. Ultimately it will be up to City Council to decide if the recommended ordinance that Planning and Zoning comes up with is something that they wish to enforce. Hileman thanked Nicol for his input. Micheel asked Nicol if he would be willing to review the draft ordinance as it progressed and give input, to which he agreed. Elliott will make changes to the draft based on these discussions and will bring back to the commission for further review. Hileman felt that the commission had worked on this subject long enough and it was time to give Council some type of work product with a report or commentary.

5. Discussion of other projects. Hileman referenced an e-mail from Mayor Scott Peterson addressing projects that he would like to see Planning and Zoning work on. Some of those items include: Comprehensive Plan, Lighting Ordinance, Design Standards, Subdivision Ordinance, Highway 30 Corridor. Mayor Peterson would like for the board to review the comprehensive plan and see if there is anything that clearly needs updating. Micheel suggested hiring someone such as ECICOG to review the plan as well, to which everyone agreed. Hileman said that the scope of the project of amending or revising the comprehensive plan is for Council to determine, whether it be replacement or amendment. He also feels that how they accomplish it is for them to determine as well. Everyone agreed. Hileman also said that he didn't think it was the role of Planning and Zoning to initiate zoning change proposals. If the City Council feels that a particular area isn't zoned correctly, it is up to them to initiate those changes. He also said that he felt that Planning and Zoning's role in all of these areas was an open question and they as a board need to look at what

- they are legally empowered to do and try to decide what they feel they can, in good conscience, do on these projects.
6. Zoning Administrator Report. Siders updated the commission on what has been happening over the last few months. Sign permit for the Methodist Church is in the works, a possible minor boundary change for a property on First Avenue NW and Hallmark Care Center permit status. Full report available at City Hall.
 7. Old Business. Hileman felt that Cornell College should be exempt from the possible lighting ordinance as they have a duty to do what is best for the safety to their students. Micheel said that everyone in each of the zoning districts impacted by the lighting ordinance should be given a chance to voice their opinion.
 8. New Business. The comprehensive plan will be discussed at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marsha Dewell
Administrative Assistant